J.E.Hoover's hysteria(?) 11/22/63; his errors and ignorance HW 3/17/92

In going over some of my "subject" files Dave Wrone made copies of 109060: 56, 57, 58 and 59, timed, all p.m., 2;21;5:15; 1:43 and 4:01. Dave's chief interest was that before Hoover started dictating ~~this~~ one of these memos to his top brass, Serial 59, he had concluded and told RFK that they had captured the assassin said "we" had the man. The FBI did not have Oswald.

Not remembering why I'd made extra copies of the FBI records for duplicate filing I read them again. They have other importances. One is that Hoover was wrong about just about every fact he stated in the memos on what he had told RFK, James J. Rowley, Secret Service Director, and Norbert Schlei, Assistant Director, DJ Office of Legal Counsel. (Schlei was preparing proclamations apparently to cover every contingency.)

That he would say the thing he not only said but would make a record of them when he had to know first that he did not really know and second that at those early times he did not have to say anything as a matter of fact. He did say that he "thought" they had the man but nothing else is qualified in any way when one would think that normal care and prudence would have impelled him not to be so unequivocal and to indicate that it was too soon to be positiive about any information he reported.

I think that he did what I'm sure he'd have disciplined a special agent for doing indicates that he was hysterical. We can only conjecture why. Two possibilities if not probabilities are that he feared his and the FBI's reputations would suffer and that he would have been expected to have been able to prevent the assassination. (Which, had the assassin been Oswald, would have been true.)

He told Rowley that one of Rowley's agents had been killed.

He had the shots from for the 4th and 5th floors but not from the 6th. and by a Winchester rifle, with Winchester shells found, the rifle found on the 5th floor.

Rowley believed the assassination was by Cuban and Mexican "extremists."

Hoover believed the Klan, the FPCC (Oswald was a "nut" of the extreme pro-Castro crowd"); and Hoover said that "all assassins" are anarchists or Communists.

Hoover and ~~Schel D Schel~~Schlei referred repeated by to assassins in the plural, or said there had been a conspiracy. Hoover did not use the word though

He said that two blocks from ~~for~~ the TSBD Oswald had shot at two cops, killing one.

He said that the TSBD was "filled with people watching the parade."

He said that for several days the FBI had been getting reports of threats against JFK from Western Union.

He reported what could be taken as an advance phone conversation about the assassination overheard by a Woodner apartments phone operator. I recall no records reflecting this.

If the FBI had gotten reports of threats from WU I recall nothing in its or the Commission's records indicating it reported them to the Commission.

The memos reflect ighorance and very poor judgement is not also hysteria.

DeLoach file

1:21 p.m. November 22, 1963

5750

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. BELMONT
MR. MOHR
MR. CONRAD
MR. DE LOACH
MR. EVANS
MR. ROSEN
MR. SULLIVAN

I called Mr. James J. Rowley, Chief of the Secret Service, to offer our assistance. I advised Mr. Rowley that our Dallas Office was already in contact with the Secret Service in Dallas and that we would render every possible assistance.

I mentioned that one of the Secret Service agents reportedly had been killed, and he stated he did not know this. I told him I had asked the name of the Secret Service Agent killed but it was not known.

I told Mr. Rowley that apparently the shooting came from the fourth floor of a building and shells had been found in the building; that these were Winchester shells - apparently a Winchester rifle was used; and that the building was surrounded.

Mr. Rowley stated he was also thinking of subversive elements - Mexico and Cuba. I then mentioned the Klan element. I advised Mr. Rowley that one witness stated he saw a Negro man lean out a window but later this was not confirmed and they do not know whether it was a white or a black.

I told Mr. Rowley the Bureau would render every assistance. Mr. Rowley indicated our assistance would be welcome and thanked me.

REC-38 62-103810-56

Very truly yours,

J. E. H.

NOV 27 1963

John Edgar Hoover

34

78 NOV 29 1963

JEH:rm (12)

SENT FROM D. O.
TIME 5:00 PM
DATE 11-23-63
BY JAC

MAIL ROOM ☐ TELETYPE UNIT ☐

Return!

5:15 p.m. November 22, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. BELMONT
MR. MOHR
MR. CONRAD
MR. DE LOACH
MR. EVANS
MR. GOBEN
MR. SULLIVAN

President John F. Kennedy

Assistant Attorney General Norbert A. Schiel, Office of Legal Counsel, called. He stated he was drafting various forms of a proclamation for use by the new President and wondered if I could tell him whether I had any knowledge as to what kind of people murdered the President. He indicated the form of the proclamation might depend on whether these were madmen, disappointed office seekers, represente some political point of view, were segregationist madmen, or just who they were.

I told Mr. Schiel I thought very probably we had in custody the man who killed the President in Dallas but this had not definitely been established. I advised Mr. Schiel that Lee Harvey Oswald spent some years in Russia, although he was born in America; that he tried unsuccessfully to renounce his American citizenship; and then came back here. I stated our interest in Oswald came about from the fact that he had been associated with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee; that he was arrested in New Orleans some months ago for handing out leaflets in behalf of that committee. I told Mr. Schiel that Oswald was working in the building from which the shots were fired; that we have the rifle and 3 empty shells found in the building in which the man was employed. I said Oswald apparently left this building and a block or two away two police officers moved toward him, and for no good reason he opened fire on them and killed one. I told Mr. Schiel that the police have Oswald in custody and we are interrogating him at the present time. I stated he would be in the category of a nut and the extremist pro-Castro crowd.

EX-101 REC-16 62-109060-5-7

As to other Presidents assassinated, I indicated I had knowledge concerning only two of them. I stated the attempted assassination of

Tolson
Belmont
Mohr
Casper
Callahan
Conrad
DeLoach
Evans
Gale
Rosen
Sullivan
Tavel
Trotter
Tele. Room
Holmes
Gandy

MAIL ROOM TELETYPE UNIT

JEH:rm (12)

President Truman was by Puerto Ricans in the Nationalist Party, which was the same group who opened fire in the House of Representatives from the gallery.

Concerning the assassination of President McKinley, I advised Mr. Schiel that Czolgosz, who killed President McKinley, was a student of Emma Goldman and that I later prosecuted her for deportation from the United States. I said we did not catch up with Emma Goldman until 1919, when we rounded up a group of anarchists and sent them back to Russia. I related that Czolgosz attended meetings at Goldman's home in Chicago, where she had a meeting place for people with anarchist views. I stated that Goldman was a well educated woman - self educated - coming from the sweatshops of the New York garment district; that she wrote on many subjects and wrote well.

I advised Mr. Schiel that almost all assassins had some imaginary grievance, usually of a political type - of either the anarchist viewpoint or the communist viewpoint. I stated the communists did not come into the picture until 1917.

I said Oswald, if he were the man, would be in the category of being an extreme radical of the left; that he was a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee; that several of the leaders of this group have been indicted; but that this man never was a leader. I stated he was born an American but tried unsuccessfully to lose his American citizenship; came back to this country in 1962; made several trips to Cuba; upon his return each time we questioned him about what he went to Cuba for and he answered that it was none of our business. I said his working in this particular building where he was employed would lend credence to the fact that he may very likely be the man.

I advised Mr. Schiel that we have been getting leads from all over the country. I stated in California there is a story which has some substance which we are running down that a man made a statement to some woman at Long Beach that the President would be assassinated in Dallas today.

I also advised Mr. Schiel that Western Union has brought to our attention telegrams containing veiled threats to the President in the past several days.

I told him in criminal cases there are always four or five people who turn up who claim to be guilty. I stated I would think Oswald would

be the one. I stated our Agents view him as a nut as he freezes up and withdraws into himself when he is being questioned as he did this afternoon down in Dallas. I said that much depends upon the evidence to be obtained; that the rifle has been handled by dozens of people probably - the building was filled with people watching the parade; by the time they got to the fifth floor, the rifle had been dropped and thrown over into a corner; there was indication he was eating fried chicken sandwiches this afternoon; we have to check this out and find where he obtained the chicken.

I stated Oswald is the principal suspect in the case; we are trying to persuade him to submit to a polygraph examination; and as soon as the body arrives in Washington, we will determine whether the bullets have been taken out because we will need that in the trial of the case to tie in with the empty shells found by the gun. I informed Mr. Schiel that at the hospital in Dallas they were not certain the bullets had been taken out; that the body is going to be removed to the Bethesda Naval Hospital and, if the bullets are still in the body, they will be removed.

Mr. Schiel stated I had been very helpful and he appreciated it very much. I told him, if we can be of any further help, to call on me.

Very truly yours,

J. E. H.

John Edgar Hoover
Director

SENT FROM D. O.
TIME 5:00 PM
DATE 11-23-63
BY [illegible]

1:43 p.m. November 22, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. BELMONT
MR. MOHR
MR. CONRAD
MR. DE LOACH
MR. EVANS
MR. ROSEN
MR. SULLIVAN

I called the Attorney General at his home and advised him of the newsflash announcing that the President and Governor Connally of Texas had been shot in Dallas, today, while touring Dallas in an open car, and that the first newsflash indicated the shot was believed to be fatal. The Attorney General had not previously been advised of this.

I asked the Attorney General if there was anything we could do at Dallas. He asked that we do whatever we could, and I told him we would get in touch with the Secret Service there.

1:48 p.m.

SAC Shanklin called from Dallas. Mr. Shanklin advised that the only information the Dallas Office had was from the radio. According to the radio in Dallas, the President and the Governor were shot at the corner of Elm and Commerce Streets in a motor parade going out to the place where they were to speak. One witness said a Negro man leaned out a window and made two shots, and the police have the whole building surrounded. The President and the Governor had been taken to Parkland Hospital and the President was bleeding from the head.

I instructed SAC Shanklin to get in touch with the Secret Service and offer assistance. Mr. Shanklin stated he had already done so. I also told Mr. Shanklin to establish liaison with the local police.

President John F. Kennedy

Tolson
Belmont
Mohr
Casper
Callahan
Conrad
DeLoach
Evans
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Rosen
Sullivan
Tavel
Trotter
Tele. Room
Holmes
Gandy

JEH:rm (11)

NOV 29 1963

REC-16

62-109060-158

NOV 27 1963

MAIL ROOM ☐ TELETYPE UNIT ☐

Memorandum for Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, Conrad, DeLoach, Evans, Rosen, Sullivan

November 22, 1963

I inquired as to the Governor's condition and Mr. Shanklin indicated they had not reported on this. I inquired about the Vice President and Mr. Shanklin said the Vice President was in the parade but in a different car.

2:07 p.m.

SAC Shanklin called again and stated the President was in very poor condition but not dead. He said they had called in two priests.

Mr. Shanklin related that the shots came from the fourth floor. He stated the Dallas Office is maintaining liaison and has offered assistance. They do not know whether the shots were fired by a white person or a colored person. The first story was that a colored man leaned out of a window but they do not know; they are searching the whole building.

Mr. Shanklin advised that the Governor had been taken to an emergency operating room and the President was in the general emergency room. The last report was that the President was in very, very critical condition but was still alive.

Mr. Shanklin inquired if the Attorney General or anyone whom they should meet would be coming to Dallas. I advised Mr. Shanklin I would let him know if the Attorney General decided to travel to Dallas.

Mr. Shanklin advised he had just received word the President was shot with a Winchester rifle.

2:10 p.m.

I called the Attorney General to advise him that the President was in very, very critical condition. The Attorney General then told me the President had died.

I advised the Attorney General that the Governor was in very serious condition; that Mrs. Kennedy was not hurt and neither was Mrs. Connally.

I told the Attorney General that the shot came from the fourth floor of a building and the building was completely surrounded now. I further advised him the President was shot by a Winchester rifle. I stated the Dallas Office is working in every way to help the Secret Service and local police.

Memorandum for Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, Conrad, DeLoach, Evans, Rosen, Sullivan — November 22, 1963

I inquired if the Attorney General intended to go to Dallas and he stated he did not know exactly what he would do. I told him, if he decided to go down, to let me know and our office would meet him.

2:17 p.m.

SAC Shanklin called and advised that the doctor had just told our Agents that President Kennedy had just died. They said this was not being put out yet.

I instructed Mr. Shanklin to go all out on this and find out who did it.

Mr. Shanklin stated they had located 3 or 4 shells in the building and the Sheriff's Office had picked up one man.

I told Mr. Shanklin to give every assistance we can there and do everything we possibly can there at the building.

Mr. Shanklin stated that a Secret Service agent had also been killed. He stated they did not mention that at first but an Agent at the Police Department advised that one died. He did not know the name of this Secret Service agent.

Mr. Shanklin mentioned that he was supposed to come in Monday and he would cancel that. I advised him I thought he should cancel this.

I told Mr. Shanklin that the Attorney General did not know what he was going to do, that he may or may not go to Dallas, but I would let Mr. Shanklin know if the Attorney General decided to go to Dallas.

Very truly yours,

JEH

John Edgar Hoover
Director

SENT FROM D. O.
TIME 5:42pm
DATE 11-22-63
BY [illegible]

5748

4:01 p.m.

November 22, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. BELMONT
MR. MOHR
MR. CONRAD
MR. DE LOACH
MR. EVANS
MR. ROSEN
MR. SULLIVAN

I called the Attorney General at his home and told him I thought we had the man who killed the President down in Dallas at the present time. I stated the man's name is Lee Harvey Oswald; that he was working in the building from which the shots were fired that hit the President and the Governor; that apparently he left the building and a block or two away ran into two police officers and, thinking they were going to arrest him, shot at them and killed one of them with a side arm; that the rifle had been left in the building.

I told the Attorney General that we have had a case on Oswald as he has been involved in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. I stated the Dallas police have him down at headquarters and I have our Agents there.

The Attorney General asked if Oswald is a communist. I said that he is not a communist but has communist leanings. I related that Oswald went to Russia and stayed three years; came back to the United States in June, 1962, and went to Cuba on several occasions but would not tell us what he went to Cuba for. I stated he is a very mean-minded individual; that it is entirely possible he may have some communist sympathies but, so far as we know, is not a member of the Communist Party.

REC-40 62-109060-59

I told the Attorney General that, since the Secret Service is tied up, I thought we should move into the case.

Tolson
Belmont
Mohr
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Callahan
Conrad
DeLoach
Evans
Gale
Rosen
Sullivan
Tavel
Trotter
Tele. Room
Holmes
Gandy

JEH:rm (12)

17 NOV 27 1963

78 NOV 29 1963

MAIL ROOM ☐ TELETYPE UNIT ☐

Memorandum for Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, Conrad, DeLoach, Evans, Rosen, and Sullivan

November 22, 1963

5749

I also informed the Attorney General that the plane has left with the President's body; that Lyndon Johnson has been sworn in and is coming in on the same plane.

I advised him that I have told our men to go down to police headquarters and participate in the interrogation of Oswald.

I also advised him that we have received information that a woman notified police authorities at Long Beach that she was told a few days ago that the President would be killed in Dallas by some man friend of hers, when he arrived in Dallas today. I stated we are trying to find this woman and locate the men friend.

I advised him also that a telephone operator at the Woodner overheard a conversation with a man in Texas in which the Washington man inquired whether or not it had been carried out and the man here said: "I will remain quiet then." I said we reported this to the Secret Service and they have sent agents out to the Woodner Apartments.

Very truly yours,

J E H

John Edgar Hoover
Director

SENT FROM D. O.
TIME 5:00 PM
DATE 11-23-63
BY

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Belmont DATE: 4/14/64

FROM : A. Rosen

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY
11/22/63, DALLAS, TEXAS

Memorandum from Rosen to Belmont dated 4/8/64 set forth information indicating that a book stamped "Top Secret", which was a reprint of the Presidential Fact Finding Committee on the Assassination of President Kennedy, was observed in the front seat of an automobile whose license was issued to Representative Hale Boggs (D. La.), who is a member of the President's Commission.

Congressman Hale Boggs was confidentially advised of this on April 12, 1964, by Mr. DeLoach. He stated the car was his; however, the material was irrelevant and also stated the car was locked.

Secret Service Agent Tom Kelley telephoned concerning this same incident and inquired what action the Bureau was taking concerning this incident inasmuch as the Secret Service had been supplied the same data and they did not wish to duplicate action the Bureau might take.

RECOMMENDATION:

If approved, Tom Kelley of the Secret Service will be advised that this incident was discussed with a member of the President's Commission, without identifying Hale Boggs as the person it was discussed with, and we are taking no further action.

1 - Mr. DeLoach

JRM:mpd (6)

62-109090

NOT RECORDED
199 APR 21 1964

12 APR 21 1964

9 APR 21 1964

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC, NEW ORLEANS (100-16601) DATE: 12/13/63

FROM : Supvr. LEON M. GASKILL

SUBJECT: LEE HARVEY OSWALD, aka.
IS - R

At 1:27 p.m., 12/13/63, Special Agent in Charge JOHN RICE of the New Orleans Secret Service Office, telephonically advised that the Secret Service had discontinued its investigation in this matter but that it was still bringing its file on the case up to date. RICE stated that the Secret Service now was supposed to bring any information of value it received in its investigation of the KENNEDY matter to the attention of the FBI for use in its investigation. RICE advised in connection with this that his office had certain information to the effect [redacted]

Refer to Secret Service

According to RICE's information, [redacted]

RICE advised in connection with the present Secret Service policy regarding furnishing information to the FBI he would normally submit this in writing to the FBI for record purposes but that if we have contacted [redacted] already he would not bother confirming the information and make no further record of it.

I told him that I would check and call him back.

LMG:lil
(2) lil

[redacted] has previously been interviewed

Reinterviewed 12/18/63 S27-2219

SEARCHED — INDEXED
SERIALIZED — FILED
DEC 13 1963
FBI — NEW ORLEANS

100-16601-277

(4)

Vol 8